

Message Text

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S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 3 BEIRUT 1763

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PBOR PEPR PGOV LE IS XF
SUBJ: ME STAFF GROUP: SOUTH LEBANON: CONVERSATION WITH FOREIGN
MINISTER BOUTROS

1. SUMMARY: BOUTROS IS IN VERY PESSIMISTIC MOOD. INDICATES THAT LEBANESE MAY REQUIRE UNIFIL CONTROL OF NABATIYAH, BEAUFORT AND TYRE AS CONDITION FOR ENTRY OF LEBANESE FORCES INTO SOUTH. SAYS SYRIANS ARE NOT COOPERATING ON PREVENTING REINFORCEMENTS AND RESUPPLY TO PLO. HE IS DOING WHAT HE CAN ABOUT GETTING GENDARMES TO SOUTH. ASKS WHAT ISRAEL WILL BE PREPARED TO ACCEPT IN TERMS LEBANESE TREATMENT OF HADDAD AND SAYS IF HADDAD PROBLEM NOT RESOLVED GOVERNMENT MAY FALL. END SUMMARY.

2. MET WITH FOREIGN MINISTER BOUTROS FOR HOUR AND
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FIFTEEN MINUTES MARCH 30 TO DISCUSS VARIOUS ASPECTS SOUTH LEBANON PROBLEM AND PARTICULARLY QUESTION DEPLOYMENT LEBANESE ARMY AND DESPATCH OF GENDARMERIE TO THE SOUTH. WITH REGARD TO FORMER, BOUTROS SAID QUESTION OF EXACTLY WHERE LEBANESE FORCES WOULD GO WAS SOMETHING TO BE DISCUSSED WITH GENERAL KHOURY. MORE IMPORTANT POINT WAS, HOWEVER, CONDITIONS UNDER WHICH THEIR FORCES WERE TO GO IN. IF

NABATIYAH, BEAUFORT AND TYRE WERE NOT UNDER CONTROL OF UNIFIL, HOW COULD LEBANESE FORCES GO IN? HE AND PRESIDENT WERE STUDYING QUESTION BUT THEY MIGHT MAKE EFFECTIVE OCCUPATION OF THOSE POINTS CONDITION FOR THEIR ENTRY. TO MOVE THEIR TROOPS INTO THE SOUTH UNDER PRESENT CONDITIONS WAS SIMPLY TO COURT DISASTER.

3. WITH REGARD GENDARMES, HE CALLED MINISTER OF INTERIOR SALMAN TO FIND OUT STATUS OF PLANS. SALMAN APPARENTLY SAID HE NEEDED ANOTHER 24 HOURS BEFORE HE COULD GIVE ANSWER AT WHICH POINT BOUTROS WENT UP IN SMOKE AND TOLD HIM TO GET ON THE STICK AND GET ANSWER RIGHT AWAY. HE THEN CALLED PRESIDENT SARKIS, INTERRUPTING HIM IN MIDDLE OF AUDIENCE WITH SOMEONE, AND TOLD HIM AMERICANS PRESSING URGENTLY REGARDING DESPATCH OF GENDARMES TO SOUTH AND THAT MINISTER OF INTERIOR AND COMMANDER OF INTERNAL SECURITY FORCES APPARENTLY DID NOT HAVE PROPER SENSE OF URGENCY. ASKED PRESIDENT HIMSELF TO GET ON TELEPHONE TO MINISTER OF INTERIOR TO GET SOME ACTION. PRESIDENT APPARENTLY SAID HE WOULD DO SO.

4. I GAVE BOUTROS PIECE OF PAPER WITH SERIES OF QUESTIONS WHICH HAD BEEN RAISED IN OUR MINDS BY TRAFFIC OF THE PAST FEW DAYS AND HE OFFERED FOLLOWING CLARIFICATIONS.

A. ADF DEPLOYMENT TO LITANI. BOUTROS SAID OF COURSE
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LEBANESE HAD WANTED ADF TO DEPLOY TO LITANI. THEY HAD GOTTEN CATEGORIC TURNDOWN FROM SYRIANS HOWEVER. WHEN SIILASVUO TALKED TO HIM HE TOLD HIM THAT HE WOULD RENDER A GREAT SERVICE TO LEBANON AND INTERNATIONAL PEACE IF HE COULD CONVINCE THE SYRIANS TO MOVE SOUTH TO LITANI. SIILASVUO HAD ASKED IF HE COULD SAY THIS WAS LEBANESE REQUEST AND BOUTROS HAD SAID "NO", IT SHOULD COME AS REQUEST FROM UN. BOUTROS EXPLAINED THAT HAVING GOTTEN CATEGORIC REFUSAL BY SYRIANS HE DID NOT WANT TO FURTHER EMBARRASS THEM AND ADD TO CONTENTIOUS ISSUES BETWEEN THEM BY HAVING THIRD PARTY REITERATE REQUEST IN GOL'S NAME.

B. I NOTED THAT FOREIGN MINISTER KHADDAM HAD SUGGESTED TO AMBASSADOR MURPHY THAT LEBANESE COULD SEND 500 MAN FORCE TO TYRE NOW AND THAT PLO HAD INFORMED GOS IT WOULD HAVE NO OBJECTION. WAS THIS REALISTIC? BOUTROS SAID THIS WAS FIRST HE HAD HEARD OF THIS AND HE DID NOT THINK IT WAS REALISTIC. HE SUGGESTED WE DISCUSS WITH GENERAL KHOURY.

C. I ASKED WHAT LEBANESE GOVERNMENT HAD IN MIND REGARDING BEAUFORT, NABITIYEH AND TYRE AND IF HE SUPPORTED VIEW OF ARAB PERMREPS TO UN, INCLUDING TUENI, THAT UNIFIL

SHOULD BE DEPLOYED ONLY IN AREAS OCCUPIED BY ISRAELIS.
HE SAID THAT HE WOULD SEND TELEGRAM TO TUENI IMMEDIATELY
ON SUBJECT. GOL DID NOT SUPPORT THE VIEW THAT UNIFIL
SHOULD BE DEPLOYED ONLY IN AREAS OCCUPIED BY ISRAELIS.
HE HAD ASKED SIILASVUO TO HAVE UNIFIL TAKE OVER NABATIYEH,
BEAUFORT AND TYRE. SIILASVUO HAD SAID THAT WALDHEIM HAD
CATEGORICALLY AND DEFINITELY SAID THERE WAS TO BE NO
DEPLOYMENT OF UNIFIL NORTH OF LITANI. WHY DID WALDHEIM TAKE
THIS POSITION? WE THEN DISCUSSED THIS SUBJECT AT GREATER
LENGTH AS REPORTED BELOW.

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D. WHAT DID LEBANESE GOVERNMENT ENVISAGE REGARDING
MAJOR HADDAD AND SO-CALLED LEBANESE FORCE? BOUTROS SAID
LEBANESE COULD NOT ENDURE MUCH MORE FROM MAJOR HADDAD.
HIS ANTICS WERE PROVOKING A MAJOR CABINET CRISES WHICH
MIGHT WELL BRING DOWN THE GOVERNMENT. GOVERNMENT HAD
DEFINITELY DECIDED TO CUT OFF PAY TO HIM AND HIS FORCES IF
HE CONTINUED. THE QUESTION WAS TO WHAT EXTENT WERE
ISRAELIS INSISTING ON PROTECTING HADDAD FROM NORMAL
LEBANESE ARMY DISCIPLINE. WHAT GOL WOULD LIKE TO DO WAS TO
ANNOUNCE HADDAD'S TRANSFER AS SOON AS LEBANESE FORCE HAD
ENTERED THE SOUTH, WITH UNDERSTANDING HE WOULD NOT ACTUALLY

MOVE FROM MARJAYOUN UNTIL LEBANESE ARMY HAD ASSUMED CONTROL
IN THAT AREA. THEY HAD, HOWEVER, TO TAKE SOME PUBLIC
ACTION TO ASSERT THEIR CONTROL OVER HIM. THEY WANTED TO
KNOW WHAT ISRAELIS WOULD STAND FOR. IF ISRAELIS INSISTED
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ON PROTECTING HADDAD AGAINST LEBANESE ARMY DISCIPLINE,
THE GAME WAS LIKELY TO BE UP.

E. QUESTION OF SCREENING RETURNEES TO KEEP OUT
PALESTINIANS AND LEFTISTS FIGHTERS. I NOTED DEPARTMENT
SUGGESTED ONLY REGISTERED PALESTINIANS BE PERMITTED TO
RETURN. WE DID NOT KNOW HOW THIS WOULD WORK. BOUTROS
SAID SIILASVUO HAD TOLD HIM UNIFIL'S MISSION WAS TO
KEEP OUT PEOPLE WHO WERE NOT BONA FIDE RESIDENTS OF SOUTH
OR WHO WERE KNOWN OR SUSPECTED TO BE MEMBERS OF THE
PALESTINIAN RESISTANCE. SIILASVUO SAID UNIFIL'S MISSION
AS TO KEEP OUT ARMED PERSONNEL AND KNOWN GUERILLAS. HE
THOUGHT THAT PROBABLY WAS AS WORKABLE A CRITERION AS WE
COULD FIND.

F. FINANCING UNIFIL. I TOLD HIM WE WERE MAKING DEMARCHE
TO LEBANESE MISSION AT UN TRYING TO ACHIEVE AGREEMENT
ON COLLECTIVE RESPONSIBILITY FOR FINANCING UNIFIL. HE
ASKED IF WE WOULD RATHER HAVE EFFORT MADE IN NEW YORK OR
BEIRUT. IF WE WISHED HE WOULD BE GLAD TO CALL IN THE
APPROPRIATE AMBASSADORS TO MAKE A FORMAL DEMARCHE TO THEM.
HE REQUESTS THAT WE GIVE HIM THE NAMES OF THE COUNTRIES
WE WISH THE LEBANESE TO MAKE THIS APPROACH TO. HE WOULD
ALSO APPRECIATE ANY GUIDANCE WE WOULD LIKE TO GIVE AS TO
CONTENT OF THE APPROACH.

5. I TOLD BOUTROS THAT AMBASSADOR MURPHY HAD IMPRESSION
FROM MOST RECENT CONVERSATION WITH KHADDAM THAT SYRIANS
WERETAKING RESPONSIBLE POSITION AND WERE TRYING TO
COOPERATE ON QUESTION OF SUPPLIES AND REINFORCEMENTS
FOR PLO. THEY WERE ALSO ANXIOUS FOR LEBANESE ARMY TO
STAND ON ITS OWN TWO FEET AND DID NOT WISH TO STAY HERE
ANY LONGER THAN THEY HAD TO. BOUTROS WENT INTO ORBIT
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AND SAID EVERYBODY KEPT TELLING LEBANESE THEIR ARMY
SHOULD STAND ON ITS OWN TWO FEET AND YET ALL ARAB
GOVERNMENTS WITHOUT EXCEPTION WERE COOPERATING IN BRINGING
ABOUT DEMISE OF LEBANON. SYRIANS, FAR FROM COOPERATING
WITH LEBANESE, WERE COOPERATING WITH PLO IN PERMITTING THE

TRANSIT OF MEN AND EQUIPMENT. THEY HAD DONE SOME
SELECTIVE SCREENING BUT IT WAS NOT HAVING MUCH EFFECT.
EARLIER IN THE MORNING 60 MEN WITH ARMS AND AMMUNITION,

FOR INSTANCE, HAD BEEN LET THROUGH BY THE SYRIANS AND
LEBANESE DID NOT KNOW HOW MANY REINFORCEMENTS HAD ARRIVED.,
BUT HE HAD BEEN GIVEN FIGURE OF 3400 AND HAD SUBSEQUENTLY
BEEN TOLD THAT TOTAL SEEMED BE CLOSER TO THAT THAN IT WAS
TO 1500, AS WE HAD ORIGINALLY SUSPECTED. WHERE DID
WE THINK THE LEBANESE WOULD GET THE MEN AND EQUIPMENT TO
COMBAT THESE ADDED PALESTINIANS?

6. BOUTROS SAID HE WOULD LIKE US TO ASK THE ISRAELIS
WHAT WAS THEIR REAL POINT OF VIEW WAS WITH REGARD TO THESE
REINFORCEMENTS. WERE THEY GOING TO REACT OR NOT? DID
THEY SEE THEM AS A DANGER? HOW LONG CAN THIS INFLUX OF
MEN AND AMMUNITION GO ON WITHOUT THREATENING
ISRAEL'S SECURITY;

7. HE SAID SYRIANS WERE BEING PRESSURED BY
IRAQIS AND MANEUVERED INTO PERMITTING SOMETHING TO GO
ON WHICH THEY KNEW WAS AGAINST THEIR NATIONAL INTEREST.
THE ENTIRE ARAB WORLD WAS PARTICIPATING IN THIS PROCESS
AND SENDING HELP TO THE PLO. THE IRAQIS AND LIBYANS WERE
PARTICULARLY ACTIVE BUT WERE BY NO MEANS ALONE. THE
DANGER POSED TO LEBANON WAS GRAVE. LEBANESE ROOM FOR
MANEUVER WAS VERY VERY LIMITED. IF THIS QUESTION WAS
NOT BROUGHT UNDER CONTROL IT WOULD MEAN EITHER PARTITION
OR THE END OF LEBANON AS A STATE. WHEN THAT HAPPENED
THE OTHER ARAB REGIMES WOULD BE NEXT AND OUR OIL INTERESTS
WERE GOING DOWN THE DRAIN ALONG WITH LEBANON. WHAT WERE
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WE GOING TO DO ABOUT IT? WHAT DID WE WANT TO HAPPEN IN
LEBANON? DID WE WANT IT TO BECOME A LEFTIST REPUBLIC
OR DID WE WANT TO SEE IT CONTINUE AS THE ONLY DEMOCRACY
IN THE ARAB WORLD? THESE WERE NOT THEORETICAL QUESTIONS.
THEY WERE VERY REAL AND THEY DEMANDED IMMEDIATE ANSWERS.

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8. BOUTROS SAID HE WAS NOT ONE OF THOSE EXTREMISTS WHO EXPECTED THE AMERICANS TO LAND THE MARINES BUT WE HAD BETTER THINK OF SOMETHING BECAUSE THE CRISIS WAS UPON US. LEBANON NEEDED TO KNOW WHAT WE HAD IN MIND AND WHAT WE COULD DO TO HELP THEM.

9. I SAID THAT WE TENDED TO THINK IN TERMS OF ONE STEP AT A TIME AND THAT WE FELT THE FIRST AND MOST ESSENTIAL STEP WAS THE REASSERTION OF LEBANESE SOVEREIGNTY AND AUTHORITY IN THE SOUTH. ONCE THAT WAS ACCOMPLISHED WE COULD PROCEED TO TACKLE THE MORE DIFFICULT PROBLEM OF THE PALESTINIAN PRESENCE, BUT I FRANKLY HAD NO IDEAS AS TO HOW WE WOULD DEAL WITH THAT. THE DEPARTMENT HAD SENT INSTRUCTIONS TO USUN TO LOBBY WITH THE SECRETARIAT TO GET A LESS NARROW GEOGRAPHIC LIMITATION OF THE UNIFIL
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MANDATE AND TO EXPLORE THE POSSIBILITIES OF PERHAPS HAVING A JOINT LEBANESE-UNIFIL TAKEOVER OF BEAUFORT AND TYRE. THEY WERE ALSO SUGGESTING THAT PERHAPS THE SYRIANS COULD BE TALKED INTO OCCUPYING NABATIYAH. BOUTROS SAID HE HOPED WE WOULD INFORM HIM IMMEDIATELY WE HAD ANY RESULTS OF OUR DEMARCHES IN NEW YORK. IN THE MEANTIME HE THOUGHT THERE WAS ABSOLUTELY NO CHANCE WHATSOEVER THAT THE SYRIANS WOULD AT THIS POINT MOVE SOUTH. HE AND PERHAPS SARKIS WOULD HAVE TO GO TO DAMASCUS SHORTLY TO TALK TO THE SYRIANS. BUT IF THEY FAILED TO GET THE SYRIANS TO TAKE A MORE ACTIVE ROLE WITH REGARD

TO REINFORCEMENTS AND RESUPPLY TO THE PLO AND WITH REGARD TO MOVING DOWN TO THE LITANI, WHAT NEXT? WHAT WOULD THE AMERICANS BE PREPARED TO DO? WOULD WE BE PREPARED TO SUPPORT SENDING A UN FORCE FOR ALL OF LEBANON SO THAT THEY COULD ASK FOR THE WITHDRAWAL OF THE SYRIANS BECAUSE THEY WERE INEFFECTIVE?

10. RETURNING TO THE QUESTION OF THE UNIFIL AREA OF JURISDICTION, HE SAID WHAT WOULD HAPPEN IF WALDHEIM SAID UNIFIL SHOULD TAKE OVER BEAUFORT AND THE PALESTINIANS WOULD NOT LET THEM? BOUTROS SAID THEN THE LEBANESE WOULD BE ABLE TO GO TO THE SECURITY COUNCIL AND ACCUSE THE PLO OF BLOCKING IMPLEMENTATION OF RESOLUTION 425. WOULD THE U.S. SUPPORT SUCH A MOVE? I SAID I THOUGHT WE PROBABLY WOULD. BOUTROS THEN ASKED SARCASTICALLY, WITH WHAT. WOULD WE PROVIDE TROOPS? WOULD WE SUPPORT A UN FORCE FOR ALL OF LEBANON ETC?

11. COMMENT: BOUTROS WAS IN A VERY GLOOMY MOOD. HE IS FED UP WITH THE INCOMPETENCE OF THE GOL ON THE ONE HAND AND THE IMPOSSIBLE SITUATION IN WHICH LEBANON FINDS ITSELF ON THE OTHER. EVERYBODY IS URGING THE
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LEBANESE TO STAND UP AND ASSERT THEMSELVES, BUT NO ONE IS ABLE TO DO ANYTHING EFFECTIVE ABOUT THE PALESTINIAN PRESENCE AND ITS REINFORCEMENT. INDEED, THE FECKLESS ARAB BROTHERS ARE SIMPLY CONTRIBUTING TO FURTHER STRENGTHENING OF THE PLO AND INCREASING ITS OBSTINACY. THE ISRAELIS FOR THEIR PART HAVE MERELY MANAGED TO MAKE THE LEBANESE CRISIS MORE ACUTE WITHOUT IN ANY WAY DIMINISHING THE POWER OF THE PLO. TO THE CONTRARY, THAT POWER HAS BEEN CONSIDERABLY ENHANCED BY THE ILL-CONSIDERED OPERATIONS OF THE PAST TWO WEEKS.

12. I HOPE BOUTROS' APOCALYPTIC VISION IS WRONG AND THAT ONE WAY OR ANOTHER THINGS WILL GET SETTLED, MORE OR LESS. I NEVERTHELESS HAVE A DEEP APPREHENSION THAT HE MAY BE RIGHT. THE CHRISTIAN RIGHT IS NOT GOING TO WAIT FOREVER FOR THE PALESTINIANS TO BE BROUGHT UNDER CONTROL AND WITH EVERY DAY THAT PASSES THEY SEE THE PALESTINIAN POSITION STRENGTHENED VIS-A-VIS THEIR OWN. THE SOCIAL PROBLEMS CAUSED BY THE INFLUX OF REFUGEES FROM THE SOUTH, THE FEARS BEING ENGENDERED BY THE INFLUX OF REINFORCEMENTS TO THE PLO, THE COCKINESS OF THE PLO, THE OBSTRUCTIVE ATTITUDES OF ISRAEL AND ITS CHRISTIAN ALLIES IN THE SOUTH, AND THE ATTITUDES OF THE OTHER ARAB GOVERNMENTS ALL BODE VERY ILL FOR THE FUTURE OF LEBANON. I KNOW THAT WE DO NOT ENGAGE VERY OFTEN IN CONTINGENCY STUDIES BUT I HOPE SOMEONE BACK THERE IS THINKING ABOUT

WHAT WE DO WHEN THE BALLOON GOES UP.

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